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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Friday, 14 September 1962, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. MATSCH

(Austria)

General Debate (continued)

Consideration of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee on the work of its first session (A/AC.105/5), of the reports prepared by the World Meteorological Organization (E/3662) and the International Telecommunication Union (E/3645) in response to General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), and of the resolution concerning international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 2 August 1962 at its thirty-fourth session (continued)

Consideration of the Report of the Legal Sub-Committee on the work of its first session

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

Mr. TABITI (Morocco) (interpretation from French): During the spring session of our Committee, the Moroccan delegation was one of the many delegations which noted with satisfaction the spirit of co-operation which distinguished our work. That is why we are not surprised today to note that considerable progress has been made since our meetings last March, and that this progress has been achieved in spite of the obvious difficulties of the task which faces us and the great obstacles which continue to be strewn in the road to effective co-operation in outer space.

Evidence of this progress is so obvious that it is unnecessary to go into detail. I refer, naturally, to the reports we have before us, reports which reflect exactly the more or less successful efforts which have been made in conformity with the lofty aims laid down for our Committee. The studies prepared by the International Telecommunications Union and the World Meteorological Organization in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), undoubtedly represent the results of serious and profitable labour, and this is all the more notable because the time allotted to these organizations for this task was limited and the task itself concerned a relatively new aspect of human knowledge in which serious gaps still remain, in spite of the extraordinary exploits with which we are now so familiar. I should like to present the sincere congratulations of my delegation to the representatives of these organizations for their appreciable contribution to the work of our Committee and for the great service they have rendered for the advancement of science, for progress, and for the welfare of the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Tabiti, Morocco)

I should also like to take this occasion to greet the representatives of UNESCO, WMO, the International Atomic Agency, and COSPAR, whose participation in our work stresses the really international character of this undertaking in the fascinating exploration of space, in which all humanity seems determined to undertake ventures after the advances made by the two great Powers in this domain.

Like many other delegations, my delegation welcomes the agreement arrived at in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, which made possible the adoption of the important recommendations contained in its report. In the opinion of my delegation, these recommendations constitute positive and encouraging results which could easily provide the basis for more extensive co-operation in the question of the peaceful uses of outer space.

The general principles enunciated in those recommendations and the suggestions presented therein contain practical opportunities for collaboration and many substantial advantages of benefit to all nations of the world, whatever their stage of development.

Amongst these aims, we would first of all point out the aim of the compilation and organization of scientific data and information which the Member States and the appropriate international agencies will later submit to our Committee on national, regional and international programmes in the peaceful utilization of outer space. My delegation is convinced that the implementation of this aim is almost certain to make scientific exchange in this field much easier and to produce favourable conditions for a rapid and co-ordinated development of science and space technology. The recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee refer to the encouragement of international scientific programmes, the common virtue of which would be the benefits to be derived from international co-operation in scientific and technical progress.

(Mr. Tabiti, Morocco)

My delegation was especially interested in those programmes which concerned international co-operation in the field of telecommunications and meteorological satellites. It is impossible to overestimate the many advantages which the adequate use of artificial satellites already has and will have to an even greater extent in the future for all countries of the world, and especially for those whose unfavourable geographic position exposes them to frequent natural calamities, often with disastrous results.

The programme of assistance, education and training recommended by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, with the aid of UNESCO, will help to provide those countries which do not now have national space research programmes with the best way of acquiring administrative personnel for participation in a general effort.

These, in brief, were the conclusions arrived at by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee in Geneva. As I have pointed out, and as many of my colleagues have pointed out before me, these conclusions and recommendations, considered separately, unquestionably represent a positive result and constitute a very encouraging sign for the future of the work which has already been started.

However, the report of the Legal Sub-Committee has given rise to various evaluations, which we find regrettable. My delegation would prefer to adhere to the information contained in the report itself. On the one hand, the meetings of the Legal Sub-Committee have made possible a very useful exchange of views, while on the other hand, no agreement was reached on any of the proposals which were submitted to it. These two statements may appear to be contradictory, but the meetings were valuable inasmuch as they gave us a reasonable perspective, which we need in order to be able to evaluate our work. It is then easy to understand that the evaluations made by the use of these results cannot be reduced simply to vague, global values. On the contrary, we should consider the results obtained in the present situation with a view towards reducing certain divergencies, bearing in mind at all times the exchange of views and contacts which took place at Geneva.

I should like to stress one other aspect. International co-operation for the setting up of a legal system to apply to outer space might be seriously compromised or delayed. The delegation of Morocco regrets that on this important

question of international co-operation in outer space no agreement was reached in the Legal Sub-Committee. The promising beginning of our work in March inclined us towards optimism. This was welcomed and received with universal enthusiasm. My delegation deplores the introduction of the cold war into a field in which everything should lead to constructive goals. It would be foolish to deny the interference of legitimate national security considerations which have clashed with the desire for co-operation as expressed by various delegations. However, the suspicions of various nations must not obstruct the progress of our future work. Therefore, our present debate, which sometimes appears to be bogged down in disagreement, must be directed towards removing the obstacles. If divergent views should continue to obstruct progress, it would be difficult not to establish a comparison between the failure of the discussion on disarmament and the present difficulties in this field we are discussing. Our Committee cannot consider such a development without feeling that it has failed in its obligations. This would be a retreat and an admission of impotence, which could not be justified and which would have serious consequences. This would amount to admitting that where spirit has conquered matter it was incapable of overcoming procedure involving some legal concepts.

My delegation does not claim to have any miraculous solution for the problems which have arisen. Nevertheless, we are firmly convinced that our search must be strictly in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the other mutually accepted principles. Above all, we must have a will to get out of the present complicated situation and into a future, which we hope will be near, in which the echo of the present conflict of doctrines and methods will have ceased entirely.

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the representative of the Soviet Union, who wishes to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I understand that we are coming to the end of the general discussion on the reports of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee, and that in a few minutes we shall pass on to the next item of our agenda. So as not to leave unanswered certain remarks which have been made on the draft declaration submitted by the Soviet Union, we deem it essential to comment at this time on what has taken place in the general debate in this Committee on this subject.

First, I must decisively reject the references made by the representative of Australia, and some other representatives of Western countries, concerning the fact that our discussion was supposedly conducted under the sign of the cold war. At any rate, the Soviet delegation cannot take any responsibility for it. From the beginning, we made friendly appeals and proposed three alternatives on the order of our work but were drawn into this unpleasant discussion. Therefore, from the very beginning and to the end of the general debate the Soviet delegation has endeavoured, and will continue to endeavour, to facilitate international co-operation in the field of outer space.

This applies not only to the position we took in the Committee, but also to the text which we proposed as a draft agreement or declaration and which is a step towards international co-operation in the field of outer space.

I should like to dwell now on that statement of the representative of France in this Committee. It has been touched upon already by Academician Blagonravov. We are grateful to the representative of France, who was the only one among the representatives of the Western countries (which refused to accept any definite decision concerning legal regulations), who made certain concrete observations about our proposals. We welcome his statement, therefore, although we disagree with most of his remarks. We are grateful to him for not having simply denied, without any arguments, the significance of the concrete proposals we made, as was done by other Western delegates.

We are still more grateful to those representatives of countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America who have supported in principle the idea of the preparation of such a document and have expressed themselves in favour of the elaboration of an international legal system to be applied to outer space which would remove the possibility of placing obstacles in the path of such activity. The statements of many of the representatives of countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America persuade us that the line taken by the Soviet delegation is fully understood and will be supported by them both in the Committee and in the General Assembly when our report is discussed.

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

The statement of the representative of France that the Soviet delegation allegedly wishes to have the draft documents submitted considered in forty-eight hours, is not founded on anything as are not founded many other of his remarks about which I shall speak a little later. It is not suggested that these documents should be discussed in forty-eight hours; they have been at the disposal of all delegations for six months now. Moreover, these documents are neither unusual nor unexpected in matters concerning international legal regulations applying to activity in the field of outer space. The proposals are nothing beyond the application of well recognized principles of international law with regard to outer space. That is why the reference to lack of time cannot be accepted as a well founded argument. Moreover, when there is goodwill and a desire to reach agreement, the time can be found in which to discuss the proposals. If the Western delegations, led by the United States delegation, would say that they were ready to discuss these documents, practical means would be found when it is a matter which concerns the lofty interests of the United Nations. I do not think that technical difficulties would limit our endeavours if there was an appearance of goodwill on the other side. Therefore, it seems to us that this argument can convince no one and fails to achieve its purpose.

I should like to reply to some individual observations of the representative of France concerning the text of our draft declaration. He said that principle 9 about assistance to astronauts was superfluous in a declaration if we can achieve agreement as to how to solve the problem of assistance to astronauts and space ships. The French representative feels that this should not be a preliminary condition but should be the subject of agreement. But this is quite wrong. In fact, paragraph 9 suggests the basic provisions which will apply even before the achievement of an agreement on assistance to astronauts and spaceships. Even before that, they would ensure the procedure and the necessary assistance which should be given to astronauts and spaceships in emergency landings.



(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

It cannot be thought that after the signature of the declaration, the other agreement would be signed immediately. The conclusion of the other agreement, in view of certain procedural difficulties, might be delayed and, therefore, it is important that the situation should be reflected in the declaration and then in the draft agreement; the important principles in the declaration should be elaborated. There are many examples of such methods of solving legal issues.

As representatives know, in our legal instrument general principles are established in the beginning, and in the more detailed part measures are elaborated for the implementation of these principles. That is a well known and internationally accepted legal practice and we cannot understand why this practice was not taken into account in the statement of the representative of France.

The French representative also spoke about principle 7 concerning the exclusive competence of States. He said that he disagreed with this provision. But I must say, with satisfaction, that here the degree of our disagreement is perhaps not so great as it might seem, inasmuch as the statement of the representative of France contained a recognition of the fact that States must be responsible for the methods and forms of conducting scientific studies in outer space for peaceful purposes only. We think that such provisions should be the result of collective work and we believe that, at the present stage in the exploration of outer space, it would be wrong to place such studies under the control of many organizations.

This statute could use t  
a basis, but it goes without  
time to examine in detail the  
statute

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

If one becomes acquainted with statements made in parliaments of many countries, one will discover that not only in our country but in the public opinion of many countries, including the public opinion of the United States, these questions do give rise to certain apprehensions. Therefore, I think that when we consider the remarks of the French representative in regard to principle 7 and in regard to many other provisions, we can find ways and means which would bring us to an agreement. We cannot agree at all with the remarks of the representative of France in regard to principle 6.

Before the statement made by the representative of France, the representative of the United States and some other Western representatives said that this point might give rise to many difficulties. The Soviet delegation had occasion to state yesterday that the very presence of difficulties connected with experiments that endanger the peaceful penetration of space gives rise to the need for the establishment of legal rules, legal norms, which would regulate it. But it is quite clear that no one can have the right to decide unilaterally what is harmful or useful for humanity in certain experiments in outer space. This is our commonweal, so to say, of outer space. One cannot reconcile the policy of the United States which, on the one hand says that the sovereignty of States cannot apply to outer space and celestial bodies - we say this too - and, on the other hand, violate this very principle by its own actions, which were mentioned here in the discussion.

When you accept the principle of non-application of sovereignty of separate States in outer space, one cannot reconcile it at the same time with unilateral undertakings dangerous to the whole of mankind and to peaceful penetration of outer space. This is so incompatible that it needs no particular stress. This is emphasized also by the statements of many representatives of the countries of Africa and Asia and Latin America which recognize this principle.

Therefore, we must energetically look for ways and means in order to find a solution for this issue which would correspond to the principles proclaimed

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

in General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI), a resolution which however, unfortunately, is not yet a legal obligation on the part of the States. The implementation of the principle of that resolution, together with the principle reflected in point 6 of our declaration, would help to solve successfully the issue recently mentioned by the representative of the United States when he said that mankind must decide whether space science will become a force for good or for evil.

I think that here in our Committee we have people who represent their States and who must take this decision. We appeal for such a decision and we cannot understand why in the circumstances the representatives of the Western countries suggest a new delay, a delay sine die or for a year, when the Legal Sub-Committee will meet again. I believe that if we cannot reach a decision on this point when we discuss the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, we will have to refer it to the General Assembly; and there, final decisions may be taken on the important issues raised on the Soviet draft declaration.

I will not touch upon the remarks made by the French representative on principles 5 and 8 in regard to prohibition of war propaganda and propaganda of national and racial hatred - I spoke about it many times - as well as the utilization of satellites for spying purposes. I had the opportunity on many occasions to express the view of the Soviet delegation on these points and I repeat that this is a very important part of our declaration. It does not need any further explanation and therefore we consider as unfounded the attempt to take these issues away from our Committee, which is competent to deal with all matters related to the elimination of obstacles to peaceful use of outer space.

In conclusion, I would like to express the wish that the ideas put forth in the general debate, many of which apply to the question of the regulation of activity in outer space, may not be forgotten when we discuss the report of the Sub-Committee in a few hours.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the representative of France who wishes to exercise his right of reply.

Mr. DAUGE (France) (interpretation from French): If I now ask to speak in using my right of reply, it is not to continue the controversy which I stated yesterday was delaying our work. I would like to say sincerely, in reply to the representative of the Soviet Union, that I noted in the statement the assurance that his delegation does not want to block our debate. I express the wish that this is so and that we will be in a position to achieve positive results. I will not speak in detail on Mr. Morozov's remarks in regard to my statement. I thank him for the objective tone which he applied and which permitted a confrontation of different points of view.

As I said yesterday, the continuation of the work of elaborating legal techniques cannot be undertaken by our Committee at this session. Therefore the method of carrying forward the work of the Legal Sub-Committee is the very issue that we have to discuss now.

The CHAIRMAN: There appear to be no other representatives who wish to speak in the general debate. Therefore, with the last intervention the general debate has come to an end and the Committee will now revert to the consideration of item 4.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE WORK OF ITS FIRST SESSION (A/AC.105/5), OF THE REPORTS PREPARED BY THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (E/3662) AND THE INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION (E/3645) IN RESPONSE TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1721 (XVI), AND OF THE RESOLUTION CONCERNING INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE ADOPTED BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON 2 AUGUST 1962 AT ITS THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION (continued)

Mr. BLAGONRAVOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): We have already heard that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee has satisfactorily fulfilled the task given to it and made specific proposals which were presented to our Committee for approval at this session, and with unanimity found agreement on the questions put before the Sub-Committee. The Soviet view has already been expressed, in other words, that the principles and recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee can be accepted.

In the speeches of the Soviet representative and various other representatives during the general debate the basic content of the recommendation of the Sub-Committee were examined and illuminated. This greatly facilitates the study of the report of the Sub-Committee and makes us hope that this question will not occupy more time and perhaps we can go on to the more difficult question, which is the report of the Legal Sub-Committee.

In the speech made by the Soviet representative in the general debate it was also noted that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee succeeded in its work; the main reason for this was that the work of the Sub-Committee had the participation of experts and scientists directly concerned with the solution of the problem of the conquest of space. The scientists understood the significance of this problem and had a good idea of the next steps in its solution; they took into consideration the various aspects of the problem and were genuinely interested in the prompt development of science. This community of interests aided the Sub-Committee to fulfil its work satisfactorily.

The participation of representatives who already had practical experience in international co-operation was also useful and valuable, for example, the World Meteorological Organization, the International Telecommunications Union, the Committee on Space Research and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The Committee would do well if it made a special point in its deliberations to thank these organizations for their aid. In welcoming the presence of these organizations at this present session, I should also like to express our conviction that in the future they will be able to provide significant aid to the Committee in the noble task of the peaceful conquest of space for the use of all humanity.

(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

Surely no one will doubt that the problem of the conquest of space is one which definitely requires the organization of extensive international co-operation for its successful conclusion and solution. Contemporary science is no longer the field of isolated geniuses. Any serious scientific achievement is normally the fruit of a large number of people. The more complicated the problem, the more frequently it is passed from one group of men to many groups and organizations. To implement these new achievements of science the co-operation not only of scientific institutes is required but also the co-operation of industries.

The problem of the peaceful conquest of space is essentially scientific because without a profound study of terrestrial and interplanetary space, without a study of the many problems of the cosmic atmosphere, and without the discovery of those secrets which science has kept concealed so far, humanity cannot take any decisive steps ahead. Because of the complexity and comprehensiveness of these problems, which require the participation of experts with so many specialities -- it is even difficult to list their specialities -- this problem requires the work of creative groups of people which goes well beyond the national framework, in other words, international co-operation.

The Soviet Union welcomes and practices international co-operation in cosmic research within the limits made possible by present tensions due to the cold war. We regret to note the limited international co-operation achieved in cosmic research. Everybody knows what the Soviet Union, with its own force and power, has achieved. The Soviet nation is justly proud of the successes; they have caused surprise all over the world and also among Soviet scientists who started on these problems many years ago.

During the launching of the first artificial satellite in 1957, if anyone said that in less than four years a Soviet man would conduct a space flight, he would have been deemed to be raving or at least an extreme optimist. Now, a month ago, thanks to the creative work of Soviet scientists and engineers, a strikingly accurate cosmic flight of two cosmonauts took place in conditions which made it possible for them to work properly with a co-ordinated system of contact between the two ships that permitted a perfect landing on the earth.

(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

Judge for yourselves how much more progress and how much more promptly it would be achieved if, let us say, Soviet scientists and engineers united their creative efforts with American scientists and engineers, if the obstacles lying on the way to this aim were eliminated and if complete and general disarmament -- the main problem of the contemporary world - was solved.

But even with these obstacles the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee was able to find fields in which it could collaborate and it found problems which were solved by joint efforts. The Sub-Committee has, as can be seen in its recommendations, based its arguments on the concentration of the efforts of all nations on the whole complexion of the problems for the conquest of space which promises immense practical benefits for humanity in the reasonably near future. For example, such tasks as that of organizing a world meteorological service with the aid of special artificial satellites. The creation as soon as is practically possible of an operative system of meteorological satellites will, without any doubt, help to improve weather service and will greatly increase the accuracy of weather forecasts for the whole world. The continued research of the upper atmosphere with the use of synoptic instruments, experiments, satellites and a further study of solar activity in the atmospheric space will help us find a more reliable way of improving meteorological service. This is, of course, an extremely important task for international co-operation in space, especially since its successful fulfilment will require a world-wide organization of earth observers. We should also note with satisfaction the recommendations of the Sub-Committee concerning the encouragement of world programmes. We hope that the World Meteorological Organization will play a leading part in the future in the determination of plans for international activity in the field of space meteorology.

(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

We noted also the recommendations of the Sub-Committee concerning the encouragement of international programmes such as the International Year of the Quiet Sun, the World Magnetic Survey and others, which have already been carried out in the framework of the activities of the International Council of Scientific Unions and COSPAR in particular.

The Committee can also note with satisfaction the bilateral talks which were held as a result of an exchange of messages between Mr. Khrushchev and Mr. Kennedy, both sides having come to an agreement on the launching, by means of magnetic fields, of United States and Soviet satellites on different orbits, with the two countries sharing the expense.

Humanity will certainly benefit from these contacts made in space. The success achieved in the field of space, both by the Soviet Union and the United States, is an important basis for the solution of space problems in the future. That is why the Committee must take note of the proposal made in the recommendations of the Sub-Committee by the International Telecommunication Union, a proposal which would have the result of moving toward the solution of this problem.

Recognizing the need to organize research on a world-wide basis as regards meteorology, the ionosphere, acronmy and solar activities, we should agree on the creation of launching pads for rockets in regions of the world where up to now the necessary conditions for their creation did not exist. The Sub-Committee quite rightly decided that at the present time the equatorial region is most important for this purpose. It is natural that once such activities are undertaken by the United Nations, it will be absolutely necessary to have an agreement for such organizations of an international character, an agreement which would guarantee the defence of the interests of the countries on whose territories these launching activities will be carried out, also taking into account the interests of the countries which could make use of it.

This statute could use the principles recommended by the Sub-Committee as a basis, but it goes without saying that the Sub-Committee did not have the time to examine in detail the provisions which should be included in such a statute. At the present time exchange of information on the problems of the exploration and conquest of space have already been carried out, and these should be developed further. We consider that the present system of world centres could solve this problem.



(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

We must welcome the measures taken by UNESCO, measures which the representative of that organization discussed yesterday, measures designed to facilitate international co-operation in questions pertaining to space, particularly the question of the training of specialists for countries which do not as yet have a sufficient number of qualified personnel in this field.

I have already said that the problem of the peaceful conquest of space is, first of all, a scientific problem. Genuine science is a science which is devoted to furthering the well-being of humanity. In the field of science it is often not possible at the beginning to determine the benefits which will accrue to humanity from a certain discovery. I might recall, for example, what happened when Hertz, in making his well-known experiments, succeeded in discovering the existence of electromagnetic fluctuations. However, he did not foresee that his discovery would have practical uses. However, the discovery has led to the extraordinary development of electronics and electronic techniques, which have had an important effect in all fields of industry. In the same way, we cannot foresee now what advantages humanity will gain from the penetration of space, but it is absolutely sure that these benefits will be very great; I am sure that no one doubts this. We could compare this scientific advance in space to the climbing of a mountain. When one is climbing up the side of a mountain, he cannot see the horizon; however, when the climber reaches the top he can see the valleys and vales in which life is flourishing, places which were previously unknown and thus new excursions and new discoveries can take place. This first progress in space research has caused us to discover the valley, and this is represented by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. The suggestions that it has made has opened the way to future progress, to the prospect of reaching new summits for science which will permit, we hope, the broadening of co-operation in space. One day our Committee will have the pleasure of considering more decisive measures which would further eliminate the obstacles which still prevent such complete co-operation.

It has already been indicated that the great obstacle in the way of progress consists of international tension in an armed world. But there are other obstacles which, thanks to goodwill, could be eliminated rather easily. Only recently, at the end of August and the beginning of September, I had the opportunity to

(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

participate in a conference of experts in the Pugwash Conference, an organ which is fighting for the creation of a sound peace on earth. Inasmuch as our Committee was created to ensure international co-operation in the exploration of space and because the conquest of space is primarily scientific, this Committee must pay heed to these scientists, scientists who represent many countries in the East and West who have studied the problem of international co-operation in the exploration of space. They came to a unanimous conclusion, namely, that it is essential to agree on banning experiments in space which could be dangerous either for the life or health of humanity, or perhaps that might prevent other important scientific experiments. That is why the Pugwash Conference recommended that an international body be created which could, with full scientific responsibility, analyse in an objective manner the significance and objectives of planned experiments, and then decide whether such an experiment would be the right one to carry out in the interests of the nations not taking part in the experiment.

Professor van der Hulst spoke here of COSPAR. He told us that COSPAR represented an association of scientists who were examining the question of the exploration and conquest of space from a purely scientific viewpoint, not on the political aspects of the problem. Unfortunately, he did not mention that COSPAR, in accordance with the resolution of ICSU, recommended that a special group could be created to make a preliminary examination of the possible harmful results of planned experiments in order that the conclusions of such a study could be brought to the knowledge of the United Nations through ICSU. It is true that a body such as COSPAR only has consultative status, and does not have sufficient authority in the United Nations, at least at the moment. I should like to repeat that one of our main concerns must be the eliminating of obstacles which may impede mutual co-operation in space co-operation. In this very Committee, whether you like it or not, scientific interests are acquired by those involved in the questions which are discussed in the other Sub-Committee. The Legal Sub-Committee, unfortunately, said nothing on the sequence of the solution of the problems facing the international community, but simply limited itself to noting the usefulness of the discussions which were held.

(Mr. Blagonravov, USSR)

I judge the usefulness of a discussion by its specific results, and I do not see any here. However I will not continue to talk about that. In my opinion, the Committee's report to the General Assembly must contain a first part dealing with the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and a second part containing a reference to the need for the prompt settlement of legal questions and for eliminating the obstacles which we have mentioned as standing in the way of international co-operation. The best way to eliminate those difficulties is shown, in my conviction, by the draft declaration which has been distributed by the Soviet Union delegation.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America): My delegation and many others took advantage of the general debate earlier this week to make our views known generally on the two reports from our Sub-Committees. I made clear earlier this week our support for the recommendations contained in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee report. Indeed, those who are familiar with the records of the Sub-Committee will recognize that the recommendations reflect proposals initiated in the Sub-Committee by the United States. I will therefore not take the time of the Committee now by any repetition and will simply state that my delegation believes that the Committee should press on and approve these recommendations.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any other representative wish to speak on agenda item 4, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's report? If no other representative wishes to speak, and since I have no more speakers on my list, I would recall that at our last meeting the representative of the United Arab Republic proposed that on conclusion of the discussion of the present item the Committee should approve the informal working paper dealing with the technical aspects of the question. The representative of Canada suggested that the working paper, excluding its introductory paragraph, could stand verbatim as part of the Committee's report to the General Assembly, the completion of which is provided for in item 6 of our agenda. The Chair has not received any negative comments and no amendments have been proposed to the working paper other than the elimination of the introductory paragraph. May I therefore take it that the Committee would agree that the recommendations as contained in the working paper should be included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly, without the introductory paragraph.

(The Chairman)

In view of the statement made yesterday by the representative of India, the Chair suggests the addition of the following factual paragraph to the working paper at the end of the text:

"(9) The Committee notes the interest of the Government of India expressed by the representative of India at its thirteenth meeting on 13 September 1962 in being the host State for international equatorial sounding rocket launching facilities on the terms proposed by the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, on the understanding that the project would be a United Nations project in which the principal powers concerned would co-operate."

This factual addition is taken more or less from the statement made by the representative of India yesterday.

Mr. MORCOZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): There may be a misunderstanding, but it was not quite clear to me from what the Chairman said whether we are also approving at this time the recommendations contained in the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. I would suggest that this issue would be best dealt with by the insertion of some such formula as the following:

"The Committee approves the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee which appear in the working paper presented."

In the working document and the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee there do not seem to be any discrepancies, but the question does arise what relationship exists between these two documents. Should we not simply approve the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee?

While I do not want at this late stage in our work to make a very strict approach to this question, in order to avoid any possible doubt that we may be approving something which does not fully correspond to the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, I suggest that some formula such as the one as I have just read might be inserted. Perhaps the text might read:

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

"The Committee approves the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee reproduced in the working document drawn up by the Bureau and presents them for consideration by the General Assembly."

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(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

The second remark I wanted to make refers to that part of your statement, Mr. Chairman, in which you spoke of the implementation of projects for equatorial launching of rockets. I should like it included in the records of our Committee that the use and the organization of such projects will be implemented in keeping with the principles of sovereignty, without any violation of the sovereign rights of States which offer their territory for the implementation of such projects, and that the guidance of such projects will appropriately be implemented by the State which offers its territory for such a project, naturally, as is indicated in the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, with the assistance and participation of the United Nations which in general, in keeping with our decision, should assist those countries which wish to participate in the project.

I do not think that we need go any further, since the elaboration of further steps for the implementation of such projects will be the subject of further study and consideration, and I imagine that a special sub-committee will be necessary for that purpose. This was referred to in Geneva, and such a special sub-committee will be necessary for the detailed elaboration of other measures for the implementation of such projects.

I do not object to the wording you suggested, Mr. Chairman, with the interpretation that I have just put forward.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair considers the text formulated and proposed by the Soviet representative to be an improvement and that it will avoid any misunderstanding. The Chair considers as more precise the Soviet Union's suggested wording to indicate that what is contained in the working paper are the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee which our Committee approves. Therefore, may I take it that the Committee approves the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee as they appear in the working paper, and wishes to present them to the General Assembly? The only alterations in the text of the working paper would be, as I have said, to leave out the introductory paragraph and make the factual addition, as paragraph 9, referring to the interest of the Indian Government in being the host State for this

(The Chairman)

international launching facility. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE LEGAL SUB-COMMITTEE (A/AC.105/6) ON THE WORK OF ITS FIRST SESSION

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America): The general debate which we have already had in this Committee has offered a very good opportunity for the expression of views on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. So far as the United States delegation is concerned, we find no need to use the Committee's valuable time now with any further statement on the substance of the item before us.

We think that a factual report should be made to the General Assembly with regard to this item. As to the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee, the United States delegation believes that at that session consideration should be given to the preparation of appropriate instruments dealing with such practical matters as liability for space vehicle accidents and assistance to and return of astronauts and space vehicles, and also that the Sub-Committee could properly consider the formulation of general principles, in addition to those approved by the General Assembly last year.

Mr. FLORENCIO MENDEZ (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Now that the Committee has begun consideration of the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, contained in document A/AC.105/6, I should like to express very briefly the point of view of my delegation.

The Argentine delegation listened with great interest to the statements made by the various representatives who spoke before us, and I should like to emphasize the constructive tone of those interventions on certain essential aspects concerned with research in the conquest of outer space and especially of the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee.

My delegation is also pleased to recognize the valuable contribution made by the representatives of the World Meteorological Organization, UNESCO, ITU and the other international bodies, to whose interesting statements we listened yesterday. In our opinion, their contribution indicates the existence of

(Mr. Florencio Mendez, Argentina)

favourable conditions for the reaching of agreement for genuine co-operation which might provide an adequate basis for the exploration and peaceful use of outer space.

As other representatives have pointed out, the conquest of outer space is not an undertaking which exclusively concerns the most highly developed countries. It also concerns other States with more modest resources who might nevertheless be associated in some way with this gigantic undertaking of the conquest of space, which is so vitally linked up with the future of humanity. For this very reason, we believe that the countries faced with this tremendous task are assuming their singular responsibilities. During the debate, the opportunities for co-operation which are opening up in this field of the conquest of space have been pointed out.



(Mr. Florencio Mendez, Argentina)

But while admitting the constructive aspects which have been achieved so far in this work with respect to the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, my delegation must recognize the concern which has been pointed out by other delegations with respect to the difficulties which arise in connexion with the legal aspects of the problem, on which, unfortunately, no agreement has been reached so far. This might be understandable, bearing in mind the number and complexity of these questions.

My delegation wishes to stress the great importance of the task of acquiring mutual understanding on the problems associated with the exploration and use of outer space. We must arrive at an understanding which will provide a certain basis on which gradually and progressively mankind might build a new law for the space age.

At the same time, my delegation feels that the examination of these problems has not reached a sufficiently mature stage of development to allow this new and complex field to be genuinely dealt with inside the framework of strict legal concepts. Not only will it be necessary to insist on these general principles, but once this stage is overcome it will be necessary to find the practical formulas which might then provide the solution for these numerous specific problems.

In the view of my delegation, it does not appear that in the short time remaining we can examine these questions in detail. For this reason we are inclined to think that the best alternative is to leave these tasks in the hands of a special sub-committee or working group made up of experts, so that the necessary time and attention could be devoted to them. Along these lines, bearing in mind the divergencies which have appeared in general doctrines, we believe that the most fruitful results can be achieved if we first study certain practical problems which are involved in the question of outer space and which are problems of greater urgency, as mentioned by various delegations, and, at the same time, problems on which we can hope to arrive at general agreement more quickly.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the Soviet Union.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Before making my statement, I would like to be sure that no other member wishes to speak on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. I make this request because in my statement I would like to take into account the remarks of my colleagues who wish to speak on this subject.

The CHAIRMAN: The representative of the United Arab Republic has indicated that he would like to speak. Is he prepared to speak now?

Mr. EL REEDY (United Arab Republic): We would like to express some views on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee. However, we did not expect that the whole item referring to the Legal Sub-Committee would be concluded today. We believe that the general debate on the whole question was useful. We also believe that the general debate on the report of the Scientific and Technical Committee was useful. Bearing in mind that we do not want to obstruct in any way the proceedings of the Committee -- on the contrary, we shall do our best to make them useful -- we wonder whether there will be further opportunities for us and perhaps for other delegations to express views on the legal questions. These questions are very important and some of them are crucial. We have a deep interest in presenting some views on these questions. I am in the hands of the Chairman in this matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Would the representative of the United Arab Republic be prepared to express his views at this afternoon's meeting?

Mr. EL REEDY (United Arab Republic): We have always been aware of the fact that this Committee is not allowed to meet in the afternoon. We thought that there would be a meeting on Monday. However, if the Committee agrees that there will be no meeting on Monday, then I think we shall have no other choice.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chair announced at yesterday's morning meeting and at the night meeting that the Secretariat had made it possible for the Committee to meet this afternoon, despite the fact that it was Staff Day. However, the Secretariat had requested that the afternoon meeting should begin

(The Chairman)

promptly at 2.30 o'clock, because the meeting must end by 4.30 o'clock, so that Secretariat members can participate in the Staff Day activities. Therefore, I would appreciate it if the representative of the United Arab Republic would be good enough to make his statement at this afternoon's meeting.

Mr. EL REEDY (United Arab Republic): We do not want to interfere with Staff Day in any way, I wonder whether there is any possibility of having a meeting on Monday.

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat has informed the Chair that if the Committee is unable to complete its work by 4.30 o'clock this afternoon, it would be possible to hold one or two meetings tomorrow, Saturday, 15 September. We therefore have three more meetings that we can hold.

Mr. EL REEDY (United Arab Republic): In that case, we would be happy to meet tomorrow morning.

The CHAIRMAN: The Secretariat has informed the Chair that it will circulate this afternoon the first part of the draft report to the General Assembly, which will contain the introduction, a historical survey of what happened since the General Assembly adopted resolution 1721 (XVI), and the second part, which will deal with the recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. When we have completed the debate on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, that part will be circulated. However, if we meet this afternoon, the Secretariat will not be able to circulate that part until tomorrow morning. It is envisaged that the fourth part of the report will refer to the registration of objects launched. The four proposals which have been submitted to this Committee will be included as an annex and another annex will give the list of the representatives.

Miss GUTTERIDGE (United Kingdom): My delegation is rather concerned about the delay. It was our earnest hope, as things were going this morning, that we would have been able to finish our work today. We seem to be very near the stage where we can agree on our report to the General Assembly. Is it really going to be necessary to continue tomorrow? I appreciate what has been said by the representative of the United Arab Republic, but I feel that it is to the advantage of all of us that we should not drag out our proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the Soviet Union and I hope that he will confine his statement to the legal issue.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): There should be no doubt in your mind, Mr. Chairman, that I am ready to speak on legal issues. I think that the lack of speakers is not an indication of a lack of interest in this aspect of the matter. This interest was shown in the so-called general debate which, in the long run, included nothing but consideration of the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee and the Legal Sub-Committee. There was substantive consideration. There was not one single speaker who did not state his views on both aspects of the question.

My second observation deals with the recent statement of the representative of the United States; it was very brief. It was a most important statement, in spite of its brevity and despite the desire to give it the appearance of arousing hopes of agreement on the proposals introduced by the Soviet Union. It was also serious for the following reason. It came from one of the two countries which are in fact engaged in outer space activity without whose agreement it is not possible to reach any agreement on co-operation in outer space. It must be said that the outstretched hand offered

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

by the Soviet Union - a hand represented by the draft declaration on the principles of an international legal system - is left hanging in the air. This is an unpleasant sensation for those who offer an outstretched hand. But at the same time it is a pleasant sensation because it shows the whole world that the principles put forward by us are not only rejected but that there is no desire to discuss them seriously in a Committee one of whose tasks is to consider every aspect of the question. If there is anything pleasant in the situation it is the knowledge that the Soviet delegation has done its duty, not only in this Committee, but in the interests of humanity as a whole and that we are attempting, before it is too late, to remove the obstacles which arise, and which will continue to arise in the future, as a result of the unsettled state of international issues concerning outer space and its peaceful exploration.

I shall not attempt to conceal the heaviness which weighs on the representatives and people of the Soviet Union because of the fact that, in the last few hours of our work, the issue remains unsolved. Until the beginning of a consideration of these matters in the Legal Sub-Committee, we had hopes that the United States delegation would alter its approach to the problems, that it would change its position, a position which was reflected in its stand in Geneva. To our great regret, and to the regret of all humanity, this has not happened. What can be achieved by this position of the United States of America? What consequences can be foreseen as a result of the refusal not only to decide upon but to consider in detail, step by step, a document in which the basic principles of the activities of States in outer space are put forward in a mandatory form? The Soviet Union is ready to sign today; it is ready to assume even today these obligations and incorporate them in an international agreement. We are ready to fulfil these obligations as sacred obligations. Twenty-six signatures on this document would have no value; there must be twenty-eight signatures. Even if all of us, including the Soviet Union, the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America - which are in principle in favour of signing the declaration - sign, if there is no signature of the United States, the whole endeavour would have no result. It is clear that without agreement of the United States it is impossible to resolve such a problem. What would be the consequences of the refusal of the United States to undertake this concrete step now? The consequences may be very serious.

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

These consequences should not be ignored. This may mean that everyone can do in outer space whatever he wishes, that there will be no norms in relations with States, that there is no legal basis for international co-operation. This may create an arbitrary state of affairs in outer space.

If this was the case a year ago or two or three years ago, perhaps it did not have such great practical legal significance. But the enormous successes achieved by humanity in activity in outer space, and the technical progress which is measured in weeks, days, months and sometimes in hours demands that the international legal aspects of the problem should if not exceed, then at least to some extent keep pace with, technical progress and should not be used to the detriment of mankind.

Therefore, if in the past one could have limited oneself to a resolution of the General Assembly, as a first step, with certain recommendations, it is now vitally necessary for humanity to consolidate these recommendations in a declaration, to elaborate them, and to provide in this document for such situations as could not have been provided for a year ago. Life marches on. We must not forget it.

Unfortunately - and I must state it with the foreknowledge of responsibility - the statements of responsible leaders of the United States concerning the elaboration of legal principles with regard to the legal system in outer space differ from their deeds. From that point of view we cannot but go back to that phrase in the statement of the representative of the United States where he indicated that the Legal Sub-Committee should be entrusted with the elaboration of the document already presented in Geneva by the United States. This document is only a partial element. It is moreover proposed to entrust this Sub-Committee with the elaboration of general

principles. In other words, a whole year went by and we did not elaborate these principles as a legal obligation. Now it is suggested that another year be allowed to go by, another year during which there will not be any legal norms, any legal provisions, which would obligate both the United States and the Soviet Union to a certain behaviour in outer space.

We propose that such a decision be taken now. References to the technical aspect are just circumvention. I am sure that one could say that half of the questions on the agenda could wait if on the issue we are dealing with now we could achieve an agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. I do not want to take away anything from the many issues before the General Assembly, but if we needed the services of the Secretariat and we needed rooms in conditions where there was a hope of achieving success in this endeavour, technical difficulties might be easily resolved. The problem is not in the lack of technical facilities. Such references are pointless. When it is suggested that we should in fact postpone the consideration of these issues for a whole year, this means nothing but a refusal to even discuss the issue.

One can say as many words as one wishes; one can bring in as many quotations as one wishes, but one cannot get away from the fact -- which is understood by public opinion in the whole world -- of why it is impossible at the moment to achieve this agreement.

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

I must energetically draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the heavy responsibility which the United States is taking upon itself when it is acting in that way in this Committee. I believe that we support the proposals put forward by the representative of the United States, to postpone the consideration of issues of international law. The only way out of this state of affairs is to report to the General Assembly the factual state of affairs. It has to be explained that in view of the position of the United States of America no agreement on issues concerning the international legal system in outer space could have been achieved.

In order not to create any formal difficulties for the acceptance of our decision perhaps we could attempt to find a formula, something of the type which we unfortunately find in the report of the Legal Sub-Committee, and in this form report to the General Assembly about the state of affairs which has been created on this issue. Of course the records of our meetings would be made available to the General Assembly so that all the States Members of the United Nations could independently, on their own, judge the reasons for the creation of such a situation.



The CHAIRMAN: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, the Chair wishes to announce that the United Arab delegation has submitted a draft resolution in connexion with item 5. The title is "Code for International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space". The document will be distributed before the beginning of the afternoon meeting.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America): The somewhat lengthy and, if I may say so, somewhat repetitive statement we just heard from the representative of the Soviet Union seems to be based on the premise that general principles, and indeed a set of general principles, fashioned by the Soviet Union to serve its political ends, must be the beginning of all legal work related to outer space. The premise is unsound.

I will not take the time of the Committee now to criticize the particular provisions of the Soviet draft. But I should like to say something about the importance of practical constructive steps to develop the law of outer space. I should like to give you tangible evidence of what the United States believes is the need for early consideration of the practical problems of space law.

Very early on the morning of 5 September 1962, a metal object weighing approximately twenty pounds landed on a street in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The object was sent promptly to the Smithsonian Astrophysical Laboratory, which engages in satellites tracking and maintains a moon-watch programme to observe objects in orbit and their reentry into the earth's atmosphere. The Observatory maintains laboratories which analyse meteorites and recovered satellite fragments. This object, found early on 5 September, arrived at the Observatory the next afternoon. The Observatory cut a six pound piece from the object in order that a series of scientific studies might be made to determine its origin. It was a man-made object and not a meteorite. An analysis by the Smithsonian Laboratory and four other laboratories showed that it was of alloy steel and that it had been in outer space for a considerable time.

From its satellite tracking, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Laboratory had calculated that Sputnik IV, launched by the Soviet Union in May 1960, would decay and reenter the atmosphere about 5 September and that Manitowoc lay on one of its probable re-entry paths. A moon-watch team accordingly made observations in

(Mr. Plimpton, United States)

in the area on the night of 4-5 September and observed the re-entry of a number of objects. The Observatory knew of no other satellite -- United States or Soviet -- which would decay or re-enter in the same time period or in the same area.

I have here today the remaining fourteen pound portion of the steel object found in Manitowoc. I place this fragment now on the table before us.

I am circulating for the information of the Committee a written report on the circumstances of the recovery of the object and on the studies which have been made of it. The United States Government would welcome an examination of this fragment by Soviet experts. We invite the Soviet Government to designate experts for the purpose. The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory will, of course, lend its full co-operation and stands ready to discuss its findings. We are prepared to turn over the fragment to Soviet representatives and will be glad to deliver it to Mr. Morozov now or at any time of his choosing.

Fortunately, the fragment here on this table caused no serious damage on impact; but the possibilities of harm are evident. This is not the first space vehicle fragment to return to earth accidentally. Parts of United States vehicles have also re-entered the atmosphere and landed on more than one occasion in the past, although by far the greatest number of satellites components are believed to be consumed in the atmosphere on re-entry and do not reach the earth.

What we have on this table is tangible evidence of the practical need to work out agreed rules and procedures for dealing with injury or damage caused by objects launched into outer space. The importance of this is obvious both for the States engaged in space launchings, and even more immediately for States not yet so engaged.

Mr. MOROZOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): There is no need, with such dramatic stage setting, to put a piece of metal on the table to show that the penetration of satellites can be damaging to humanity, as described by Mr. Plimpton. I do not know to whom this piece of metal belongs, whether it belongs to the United States, to the Soviet Union or to any other State. I get away from this **question because if this piece of metal belonged to the United States, or to the Soviet Union, or to any other country, if it fell on my head or the head of my interlocutor here, the results would be the same.** If these dramatic means are utilized here, we can only express our regret that they are used in order to divert our attention from important and great issues.

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

We may indeed speak of dangerous consequences for the whole of mankind of changes in the Van Allen belt, which change the environment of the earth. This piece of metal which, figuratively speaking, is being thrown at me by the representative of the United States will not hit its target. It will miss it because we repeat that we are ready to examine the proposals of the United States of America concerning responsibilities for damage caused by operations in outer space. However, when he endeavours to replace the whole of the problem as we have stated it for the sole question of the possible consequences of the falling of a piece of metal, when he tries to concentrate the efforts of this Committee on this problem, then we say no. We do not wish to create the impression that the solution of necessary juridical problems is beginning to be made. Nevertheless, we point out that we have never denied the international responsibility of States as regards the consequences of their activities on land, on open seas, in the air, and in space. We are ready to consider their draft. However, the unfortunate thing is that the United States is asking us to consider its text, a text which takes up only limited problems. The United States tells us: "Your text, which deals with the general problems and solves the most important questions, we do not wish to consider, we will consider it later". That is the difference in our positions.

The United States representative has also said that the Soviet draft resolution is dictated by the selfish interests of the Soviet Union. That is not correct. You only have to look at the nine principles, particularly, the ninth principle, which refers to this piece of metal, which is still on the table, with all its melodramatic aspects, in front of the United States representative. As I said, the ninth principle speaks of the responsibility of States arising out of their activities in space.

(Mr. Morozov, USSR)

We are told that the Soviet draft resolution is only trying to create some advantages for the Soviet Union. But we suggest an agreement which will be obligatory both for the United States and the Soviet Union as well as binding on those who wish to associate themselves with this agreement. It is provided in this agreement for the banning of experiments which have been described by the great British scientist Mr. Lovell as useless, dangerous and stupid, experiments which are carried out in space such as high altitude explosions and other experiments which place obstacles in the way of the peaceful uses of outer space.

Do you think that this problem concerns or worries the Soviet people and the Soviet Government alone? Do you not think that this is a problem which concerns and worries all peoples? Do you not think that the American people itself is not worried about this, a people whose Press contains many articles and many statements made by persons who are protesting against the same thing?

The statement of the United States delegation includes two stages: the first is a quick refusal to consider this question. If the Soviet delegation makes a statement exposing the position of the United States then we get this piece of metal. These tactics are plain. It is impossible by means of such statements to hide from world public opinion the very simple fact that the United States wishes to limit itself to studying the responsibility of States in case of the accidental falling of pieces of satellites.

We are not opposed to this question being made the object of negotiation on legal aspects in the event that the United States does not refuse to accept the principles that we have set out in our draft declaration. This does not represent the designs and objectives of the Soviet Union only, but the designs and objectives of humanity as a whole. However, we are ready to examine this problem too. An attempt of this type must not hide or underestimate the political importance of the fact which confronts us today, and it is with a heavy heart that we must take note of this situation: we see no indication of a desire on the part of the United States to work out the elaboration of principles on which must rest the juridical basis of international co-operation.

Mr. PLIMPTON (United States of America): Just one sentence, which really is a repetition of a sentence that I am afraid the representative of the Soviet Union did not hear a few minutes ago. This is what I said was the United States position. As to the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee, the United States believes that at that session consideration should be given to the preparation of appropriate instruments dealing with such practical matters as liability for space vehicle accidents -- witness exhibit A on the table -- and assistance to and the return of astronauts and space vehicles, and also that the Sub-Committee could properly consider the formulation of general legal principles in addition to those approved by the General Assembly last year.

Mr. ATTOLICO (Italy): I will take just a few minutes of the Committee's time to express our views on the report of the Legal Sub-Committee and I will confine my remarks to a bare minimum. Since the General Assembly, by unanimously adopting resolution 1721 (XVI), established a set of basic legal principles with respect to the use and exploration of outer space, indeed very little further concrete progress has been made in this field. However, we do not feel that the Legal Sub-Committee's conclusions, admitting that no agreement has been reached on any of the proposals submitted to it, are entirely discouraging if due account is taken of the fact that the Geneva meetings were useful in outlining areas and issues requiring further thorough and, may I add, dispassionate consideration.

In fact, it should not be surprising that difficulties have been encountered by our legal experts, for they are faced with an essentially complex situation, namely one which is in evolution subject as it is to continued technological development. Whatever the difficulties, there is no reason why, with a sincere effort on the part of all its members, in a future session the Committee should not be able to accomplish progress in this sphere. I fully share the constructive approach outlined by the representative of Argentina, namely that a body of experts, such as our Legal Sub-Committee, should with renewed vigour and in an atmosphere of serenity try to make progress in two directions, on the one hand the elaboration of general principles in addition to those already set out by the General Assembly resolution, and on the other hand the elaboration of more specific and comprehensive rules relating to limited aspects of space activities

(Mr. Attolico, Italy)

in respect of which legal regulation is more necessary and applicable in the light of the present stage of technology. May I submit that this approach would enhance, rather than delay, a solution of these problems in which my country is most interested and concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I adjourn this meeting I would like to say that I would be grateful if the representative of the United Arab Republic would introduce his draft resolution in the course of the afternoon meeting. Some other speakers may precede him, but I would appreciate it if he would present his draft resolution during the afternoon.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.